Kate O'Riordan
The Cambridge Companion to Queer Studies

Queer Digital Cultures

Queer digital culture refers to the ways in which LGBTQ+ identities, practices, and theories have been mixed up in the emergence, design, and constitution of digital technology. There have been significant shifts at the intersections of queer identity and politics and digital communication technologies from the 1980s to the early twenty-first century. A digital artefact that helps to open out these shifts, across many of these categories, is the 1998-1999 Brandon Exhibition. Created by Shu Lea Cheang, a leading digital artist, the Brandon Exhibition was one of the first digital art works to enter the Guggenheim art collection. Inspired by the life of Brandon Teena, a transman murdered in Nebraska in 1993, the artwork was experimental, exploring both Brandon's life and the capacity for digital technology to facilitate rethinking and experimentation around gender, sexuality, and technology. Created on the cusp of a shift from a text-based environment to an audiovisual internet, it signals the digital aesthetics and practices of the 1980s and 1990s. It features a largely black or white background with high-lighted text, pop-up images and a scrolling back screen. It is based on hand written HTML, with use of Java applets. Because contemporary browsers no longer support most of the features, it had to be restored in 2017, making it again a front-runner, as one of the first examples of a large-scale digital art restoration project (Philips, et al, 2017).[1] The project signals shifts in media art practice from experimental digital forms (like net.art) into a more mainstream art world, and the emergence of a broader discourse about trans and gender identity as a political project. It also explores questions of identity performance and aesthetic experimentation.

The shifts reflected in the Brandon Exhibition also characterize scholarship on the intersection of queer culture and digital communication technologies over the same period.

This essay will explore these developments in queer digital culture across the following categories, tracing the gradual shifts from:

- textual to audiovisual;
- subcultural to mainstream;
- utopian political aspirations (Afrofuturism; cyberfeminism; cyberqueer) to commercialization
- identity play and performance to consumer authentication

The following entry explores the way that shifting digital cultures have been embedded in the increasing visibility of queer cultures since the 1980s.

Textual to Audiovisual

A significant shift for queer digital cultures and all that they comprise is the transition from textual HTML authoring environments, with some multimedia elements, to that of a broad spectrum audiovisual media environment. It is important to register that this shift is most pertinent to the networked dimension of digital media. Digital art installation and creative work offline had already seen the development of fully audiovisual, immersive, and 3D environments, before broadband and wifi. However, networked forms entail demands for connectivity and bandwidth and remained largely textual until the early twentieth century. In this context, interpersonal communication through news groups and email, from its emergence in the 1980s, remained the core of networked digital culture in the 1990s.

Email lists, news groups and text-based environments dominated networked forms in this period. The US-based newsgroup "motss," which stood for "members of the same sex," was set up in 1983 by Steve Dyer.[2] The 1980s can be characterized most significantly, for queer culture, in terms of the AIDS crisis and this group, along with multiple other online groups, featured sustained references to AIDS in the period. David Auerbach, reflecting on

motss observed that, "Online discussion became a necessary counter to AIDS hysteria and ignorance, where people could share their own stories and alternative news sources."[3]

Auerbach's reflection helps to shed light on the ways in which computer-mediated communication seemed to offer something different, even utopian, for LGBTQ+ people. In the context of homophobic mainstream news, culture and legislation, these online exchanges were sites of alternative knowledge politics which afforded both community and experimentation with textual performance of identity. Newsgroups, discussion formats, and networked games of the 1980s were forms of subcultural and alternative media, and as such instantiated experimental and grounded forms of interaction. What was new, for many people, was the networked reach of these forms. Although much early dial-up meant that interactions were grouped regionally, these were extensive regions bringing together new forms of networked publics. Dial-up also enabled connection to servers in other countries and regions, and the possibility of engaging with different people and communities.

Whilst the news groups and webpages of the 1980s and 1990s were largely text-based, the development of a multimedia internet in the late 1990s and into the twentieth century also changed this culture. Interim developments included animation, colour, and sound, while programming languages such as Java in the 1990s and later Flash facilitated running audiovisual media. Mobile phones, 4G, and wireless broadband were all significant in this changing environment. The popularity of web cameras (inhibited by large file sizes in the 1990s), to the development of YouTube in 2005, and its mobile phone interface in 2007, are indicative of these shifts from graphic design desktop interfaces to audiovisual mobile media.

The development of an audiovisual internet changed the kinds of engagement, particularly in relation to identity play and experimentation. For example, from 2000 onwards, photographs were included in online profiles as standard. The order of social media

is differently demanding in relation to identity and in generating genres and conventions of representation. Audiovisual interfaces including photos, videos, and voice, both in synchronous and asynchronous communication bring in an element of the seen and heard, in addition to the written or typed.

Subcultural to Mainstream

Digital culture was often referred to as cyberculture throughout the later twentieth century, and the term cyber was particularly salient in literary studies, and in association with the science fiction genre, cyberpunk. Cyberculture, as a set of subcultures, and cybercultural studies can be seen as referring to a specific historical moment. However, the legacy term is often used in the contemporary moment to signal negative meanings such as cyberbullying and cybercrime. Digital media then in the 1980s and 1990s were seen as both subcultural (for example, games) and interpersonal (for example, group discussion or email). At the same time, LGBTQ+ cultures were also seen in terms of subcultures, a formulation reflected in academic research which explored subcultural formations online.[4]

Iterations of digital culture in the 1980s and 1990s were dominated by ideologies of a speeded-up, global community with general freedom via technology. [5] As Nina Wakeford notes, this promise of freedom was taken up enthusiastically in the gay press.[6] However, the liberatory affordances for LGBTQ+ people were not the same as those offered to the mainstream straight white male subject of cyberspace. Steven Whittle, for example, gives an account of how email engagement enabled a new community formation around trans issues and identities:

> In particular, cyberspace has enabled transsexual and cross-dressing people to create and promote a new self-identification category, transgender, which has resulted in a re-drawing of boundaries to create a new community identity, trans.[7]

The possibilities for self-identification, re-drawing boundaries and new communities that Whittle suggests that cyberspace offered were significant for LGBTQ+ people. The 1980s and 1990s were periods of significant legislative change in relation to rights in many countries, as well as periods in which institutionalised homophobia and persecution were also part of the conditions of people's lives. The radical promise of queer to reconfigure and disrupt the straight world, came together with emerging desires for digital technologies to provide a radical intervention into what was seen as either narrowly policed subcultures, or homogenized, top-down, commercial, media monopolies in other media forms.

The app culture of the twenty-first century has continuities with the perceptions of a homogenized, mainstreamed LGBTQ+ digital culture. However, it also offers proliferating niche markets mapping onto and sometimes constructing gay subcultures, perhaps as tightly defined as ever. Gay dating apps, for example, often cater for tastes and practices such as bears and barebacking. These interfaces take the "drop down menu" logic of dating sites[8] to new levels by offering distinct niche apps rather than categories within a site, although there are also generic dating apps. Lesbian dating apps are much more general and less broken down into niche markets. They have also been produced to a certain extent in opposition to the identification of gay male dating apps as the model for online dating. The women's dating app, Her, was set up in 2013 by Robyn Exton, who said 'the market was dominated by "dating sites that were initially created for gay men, and tuned pink for lesbians."[9] Her is instead focused on creating and advertising community events, with local representatives organising local events, and combines dating with friendship and socializing. It moves away from the explicitly hook-up design of most gay male dating apps, and mainstream sites like Tinder. While Tinder, created in 2012, is credited with taking the stigma out of online dating for heterosexuals, gay male dating apps—and before these, websites and newsgroups—have made digital culture central to LGBTQ+ experiences since the late 1990s. These apps have

registered in other media forms, such as the popular UK TV series *Queer as Folk*, which aired in 1999 and featured online hook ups as a central plot device.

Utopian to Commercial

The techno hype of *Wired* magazine and an emerging Silicon Valley dominated media narratives about the information highway, the electronic frontier, and cyberspace, as digital culture was imagined in the 1980s and 1990s. However, alongside these were more critical utopias for social and political change, including cyberfeminism, cyberqueer, and Afrofuturism. These sensibilities formed around the potential and possibility for marginal groups to be empowered through emerging digital forms, as Whittle and Auerbach note above. This utopian vision was characterized by hopes that digital technologies could link people across distance and enable emergent and collaborative forms of connection and community that might reset social norms. These hopes also formed around a sense that digital media was an emergent form and, as such, was potentially up for grabs. The predominantly text-based forms of interaction and the perceived freedom from mass media forms also facilitated ideas about identity fluidity, experimentation, and play.

Cyberfeminism emerged in the early 1990s as a feminist art and activist movement and, although largely inspired by Donna Haraway's feminist cyborg,[10] it also had links to feminist video and performance art movements in the 1970s and 80s. It was driven in part by the sense that it was possible to take up the means of cultural production in the context of electronic media and reconfigure power relations in doing so. In the *Next Cyberfeminist International* the Old Boys Network wrote:

> It behooves feminists to become technologically skilled and knowledgeable lest the new technologies of global communication and domination once again perpetuate and strengthen the same old male culture and power structures.[11]

Engaging with concerns about gender, sexuality and technology, cyberfeminism was a movement that queered both feminism and cyberculture and challenged anti-trans feminisms. Sandy Stone's interventions in both trans and cybercultural discourses make her an important figure through which to think about queer-digital relations. In her 1995 book, *The War of Desire*, she wrote that phone sex workers:

> took an extremely complex, highly detailed set of behaviors, [and] translated them into a single sense modality. . . . [W]hat was being sent back and forth over the wires wasn't just information, it was *bodies*.[12]

In this way, Stone illustrates the capacity of cyberculture, in its textual forms, to compress identity and interaction into single sense modalities, which, as suggested, offered capacities to re-configure bodies through transmission. This concern with the digitization of bodily affects and experiences and the possibility of reconfiguring bodies in the process remained an important node of discussion for feminism, queer theory and activism. The possibilities for fluidity and change seemed to be opened up, both for bodies and power relations.

Hans Scheirl's 1998 film *Dandy Dust*, explored many of the central tropes of early queer cyberculture. Scheirl's own synopsis of the film read: "A split personality cyborg of fluid gender zooms through time to collect h-selves in the fight against a genealogically obsessed family."[13] Scheirl, like Stone, was a member of the trans community and the themes and figures of trans were central to ideas about identity in transition and fluidity. The art and culture of cyberculture in the 1980s and 1990s were not just about what was practiced online at the time, but were expressed through film, video, and performance art, and the novels of cyberpunk. Although cyberpunk, of which William Gibson's *Neuromancer* (1984) is the ur-text, was seen as a genre dominated by boys playing with techno-toys, it was also much more subversive in its own right than this assessment allows. It was also an important space for experimenting with gender and sexuality with intersections with feminist science fiction. For

example, Kate Bornstein published (with Caitlin Sullivan) the novel *Nearly Roadkill: An Infobahn Erotic Adventure*, in 1996.[14] The novel ran with the "freedom from the meat,"[15] or the potential to experiment with embodiment invoked by Gibson, but queered it through an exploration of gender performance and fluid sexuality.

Afrofuturism also emerged as discourse in the same period—the early 1990s—although it now retrospectively casts itself as a tradition emerging from the 1950s onward. It refers to a cultural formation in which technological utopian thinking is used to revision race, and particularly power relations and dominant histories of slavery, empire, and racism. Mark Dery uses the term in his book *Flame Wars: The Discourse of Cyberculture.*[16] He refers to the work of feminist science fiction writer, Octavia Butler as an example, and interviews Samuel Delany to elaborate on the form. Octavia Butler's feminist science fiction explored inter-species and symbiotic relations, as well as shape changers, aliens, and time travellers. Like cyberfeminism, this was simultaneously an art and activist discourse, a site of popular culture, and an academic trope. Although Afrofuturism can be mapped distinctly, it can also be thought of in terms of shared ground with cyberpunk, and particularly in terms of both constituting and queering cyberpunk's white masculinities. Jillana Enteen, for example, examines Nalo Hopkinson's afrofuturist science fictions as both core to cyberpunk and providing a critique and renewal of the form.[17]

In the late 1990s and early twenty-first century, digital industries were seen as a force of emerging commercial success, either as new commercial entities or absorbed into older media structures. This period of a mass attraction of capital has been variously referred to as the dot.com bubble/dot.com crash. For example, AOL (America Online) merged with Time-Warner in 2000, creating the largest US media company at the time. At the same time, the "pink pound" and other gay markets became valuable in their own right. This doubled commercialisation organised both digital media and queer identity in terms of consumer

identities. There was much anxiety about this consolidation, mainly of publishing platforms, which appeared to move towards monopolies. Planet Out and Gay.Com merged in 2000 and started trading on the US stock exchange in 2004. In 2003 Joshua Gamson detailed the political economy of major gay portals in the period in his chapter, suggestively titled, "Gay Media, Inc."[18] Although he argued that LGBTQ+ media cannot be modeled on media monopolies, he also pointed out that these concerns about commercialization and media expansion sharply contrasted with existing queer internet scholarship at the time, which tended to look at what was opened up, afforded, and liberatory.[19]

Concerns then about media and publishing monopolies in digital media, together with resurgent commercial values, also dovetailed with Lisa Duggan's formulation of homonormativity, in which she saw:

> A politics that does not contest dominant heteronormative assumptions and institutions, but upholds and sustains them, while promising the possibility of a demobilized gay constituency and a privatized, depoliticized gay culture anchored in domesticity and consumption.[20]

The dot com crash of the early 2000s was shortly followed by the discourse and hype of Web 2.0. This round of internet enthusiasm promoted platforms and apps, and Facebook became the model for this kind of social media, followed also by Twitter. Sharif Mowlabocus' work on Gaydar, dating, and hook-up cultures also points to the replication and exacerbation of misogyny, homonormativity, racism, and conformity to identity templates and figures from porn cultures.[21]

From Identity Play to Authentication

Text-based environments facilitated desires for experimentation and reinvention as well as community. Online gaming—or role play domains—MUDs and MOOs (multi-user-

or multi-object-orientated domains) were, like newsgroups, relatively popular subcultural forms in the 1980s and 90s. LAMBDA MOO, for example, has attracted perhaps the most commentary,[22] but it is worth returning to in this context because it was emblematic of some of the hopes and tensions of the form. "LAMBDA," the name of the MOO itself, was able to represent the two overlapping constituencies of programmers and geeks on the one hand and LGBTQ+ constituents on the other. A letter in the Greek alphabet, LAMBDA was adopted by civil rights movements in the 1970s, but it is also the name of a programming function. The textual environment of LAMBDA combined pre-set descriptions, which prompted direction, with free-form text fields, which enabled any kind of content. The pre-set loading page or entry into LAMBDA was the closet. To enter LAMBDA then was to come out of the closet into a text-based environment in which identity play was encouraged and a number of pronouns and human and non-human animal identities were possible. For example, 'Spivak' pronouns such as 'e' 'em' and 'eir' were used, and role play encouraged multiple and imaginative expressions.[23] LAMBDA and other environments encouraged creative and expressive engagement, but players also reported experiences that challenged this openness. Racial and gendered passing, which fetishized identities and rendered them in sexualised and exoticised forms, were common, while racist expressions of sexual preference also proliferated online.[24] Some of the most common direct message requests, even in forms like LAMBDA, were for declarations of sex, race, and location, regardless of the affordances of a particular environment.

This oscillation between queer utopian affordances on the one hand, and anxiety about pre-defined social categories on the other, characterised some of the hopes and tensions of these cultures. These frictions speak to concerns raised by Sandy Stone, who worked in the games industry and led media labs during the 1980s and 1990s, and was also an important figure in queer culture. She considered that the compression of communication into single

modalities, such as text based networked media—and telephones—amplified the question of the relationship between identity as performed and expressed, and that of a legible legal subject, such as a citizen. In trying to theorise cyberculture as a new kind of both media space and physical space, she defined this relationship in terms of warranting, which refers to the "production and maintenance of a link between discursive space and physical space."[25] She sees digital culture as creating a "technological object that acts as a channel or representative for absent human agencies."[26] Digital culture is, in other words, a media culture. In mediating human (and other) agencies, the form and the content play significant roles. In Stone's account, textual interfaces may more easily challenge the connection between a socially legible persona and a politically apprehensible citizen.

The concept of warranting also had strong resonance with Judith Butler's interventions in to thinking about identity and culture.[27] Butler's work was exceptionally influential in the 1990s and her work on performativity, although not a theory of mediation *per se*, spoke to media scholars and activists thinking about emerging digital media spaces. Butler argued that identity was performative rather than pre-given but it could only be legible if it was performed in relation to dominant social norms. She articulated the relationship between the performance of identity and such norms in terms of citation, iteration and re-iteration, which she examined in relation to hierarchies of success, failure, compliance and resistance. This sense of identity as iterative and citational strongly meshed with the performance of textually expressed identities online in compressed media modalities. Stone's ideas about warranting and Butler's theories of citation and iterative legibility spoke to questions about whether the social norms about which identities are more legible than others could be re-written to be more inclusive and accepting of a range of LGBTQ+ identities. They also asked whether queer cultural production could itself be more expansive and inclusive, and whether new citational practices could be transformative. Whilst much of these

textual interactions reiterated forms of anxiety and policing of identity, in tune with notable forms of transphobic, racist, and anti-queer discourses of the time, they also opened up the possibility of transformation.

In 2010 Facebook's CEO Mark Zuckerberg announced that having more than one kind of line profile—what he described as "more than one identity"—was a sign of inauthenticity.[28] This seemed to signal the end of a set of engagements with digital culture that emerged in another era and were concerned with the body, identity, and community in the registers of solidarity, play, and experimentation. What he articulated in that moment was significant because of the changing context. Engagement with digital culture has historically been centrally concerned with identity, but earlier internet industry discourse also welcomed identity play, performance, and self-styling. From games in which players are invited to make up avatars, to MUDS and MOOs using roles and characters, to home pages, there was an emphasis on roles, personas, pseudonyms, and exploration of self. There were also significant controversies about deception, and a simultaneous desire for people to express themselves in terms of sex, location, and age. This was not a utopia (or dystopia) of flickering signifiers, but nor did it foreclose identity as the same as a media profile *tout court*, and there wasn't an assumption that you could only have one version.

In the contemporary moment, many trans and non-binary people experience exclusion and legislative illegibility because of issues around pronouns or changing names. This also intersects with other naming issues such as religious practices and migration. At the same time in the UK (and elsewhere), an increasing number of people visibly identify as trans or non-binary. This shift coincides with a moment in which issues around warranting are more important (rights are only accessed through citizenship in most of the liberal democracies of the west) and social media is assumed to be ubiquitous. Zuckerberg responded in part to the criticism of his single identity claim by offering a proliferating list of pronouns. However,

research demonstrates that Facebook's algorithms reassemble users into male or female, gay or straight, when repackaging their data for advertising revenue. Play and experimentation are less at the forefront; instead, commodification and forms of compliant individualism are more so. For example, although dating apps have proliferated, their visual culture is standardised.[29] The advertising material for dating apps, and the profile culture they facilitate, enforce specific norms for desirability and for identity. The widespread use of digital platforms for verification makes online profiles evidence for a legible, out and singular subject. For example, Facebook is used to verify identity and authenticity from job applications to dating apps. Likewise, the sign up for Her uses Facebook as a form of verification in order to try to prevent too many men signing up. On the other hand, Facebook has fallen foul of feminist, trans, and queer communities because of an insistence on singular identity profiles.

Resistance

In a direct counter to concerns about homonormativity, platform monopoly, and the pink pound, monopoly media ownership has also generated creative responses, resistance, and subversive media engagements. Older forms of digital culture are remediated and archived as well as pushed out by newer forms. Resurgent histories, and untimely temporalities such as the return of AIDS texts, which are now represented as media archives, and zine type media productions across social media platforms come together with new forms of activism, such as "unicorns farting rainbows" and other meme-orientated productions by young people.[30] Digital activisms have facilitated global networks and movements such as #BlackLivesMatter. Alt and niche terms such as pansexual, gender fluid, and non-binary have circulated at a different scale, to the extent that young people can engage in these registers and develop language with a much stronger capacity to warrant such identifications and make

them correspond more closely with legally legible subjectivities. For example, the stating of pronouns and use of alternative pronouns has become a standard practice for core LGBTQ+ organisations (e.g. Stonewall) as well as youth services, student unions, and conferences in the USA and UK.

None of the affordances of the digital media environment ameliorate the extent of loss and injustice also proliferating. New forms of heteronormativity, heterosexist activism,[31] and populist racisms in Europe and the USA also operate at new scales. The rise of the right and of extremism in relation to racist, sexist and homophobic aggressions is well documented.[32] Biological explanations of binary sexuality systems, aggressive incitement to hatred, and treatment and cures narratives also proliferate in the context of digital media. Older forms of homophobia are being programmed in at the level of algorithms, as indicated by Yilun Wang and Michal Kosinski's recent claim that they could program a computer to recognize gay faces.[33] Mark Dery characterised the discourse of cyberculture in the 1990s as that of "flame wars": aggressive and argumentative.[34] The last decade has seen the scaling up of this aggression in relation to structural inequalities. For example, the misogynist trolling of black women, feminist figures, and trans advocates has escalated to the extent that people's bodies, jobs, well-being, and lives can be at threat. Alongside the rise of new forms of heteroactivism, commodified identities and ubiquitous but unequal digital access, LGBTQ+ digital media continues to offer the promise of solidarity and intervention in relation to social justice.

Further Reading

Bryson, Mary. "When Jill Jacks In: Queer Women and the Net." *Feminist Media Studies* 4, no. 3 (2004): 239-254.

Fleetwood, Nicole R. *Troubling Vision: Performance, Visuality, and Blackness*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011.

González, Jennifer. "Race and the appended subject." In *Race in Cyberspace*, edited by Beth Kolko, Lisa Nakamura, and Gilbert Rodman, 27-50. New York: Routledge, 2000.

Munt, Sally R., Elizabeth H. Bassett, and Kate O'Riordan. "Virtually Belonging: Risk, Connectivity, and Coming Out On-Line." *International Journal of Sexuality and Gender Studies* 7, no. 2 (2002): 125–137.

Rambukkana, Nathan. "Taking the Leather Out of Leathersex: The Internet, Identity, and the Sadomasochistic Public Sphere." In *Queer Online: Media Technology and Sexuality*, edited by Kate O'Riordan and David J. Phillips, 67-80. New York: Peter Lang, 2007.

Raun, Tobias. *Out Online: Trans Self-Representation and Community Building on YouTube*. New York: Routledge, 2016.

---

[1] Joanna Phillips, Deena Engel, Emma Dickson, and Jonathan Farbowitz, "Restoring Brandon, Shu Lea Cheang's Early Web Artwork," *Checklist*, Guggenheim, May, 2017, https://www.guggenheim.org/blogs/checklist/restoring-brandon-shu-lea-cheangs-early-web-artwork.

[2] David Auerbach, "The First Gay Space on the Internet." *Slate* August 20, 2014. http://www.slate.com/articles/technology/bitwise/2014/08/online_gay_culture_and_soc_motss_how_a_usenet_group_anticipated_how_we_use.html.

[3] Auerbach, "The First Gay Space on the Internet."

[4] See, for example, Nina Wakeford, "Networking Women and Grrls with Information/Communication Technology," in *Processed Lives: Gender and Technology in Everyday Life*, ed. Jennifer Terry and Melodie Calvert (New York: Routledge,1997), 31-46.

[5] These ideologies were promoted by *Wired* magazine, launched in 1993, which became emblematic of Silicon Valley. Based in San Francisco, it was linked to Stewart Brand, and its strap line was the *Rolling Stone* of technology. See Fred Turner, *From Counterculture to Cyberculture: Stewart Brand, the Whole Earth Network, and the Rise of Digital Utopianism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006).

[6] Nina Wakeford, "Cyberqueer," in *The Cybercultures Reader*, ed. David Bell and Barbara Kennedy (New York: Routledge, 2000), 350-359.

[7] Steven Whittle, "The Trans-Cyberian Mail Way," *Social and Legal Studies* 7, no. 3 (1998): 390.

[8] Sharif Mowlabocus, *Gaydar Culture: Gay Men, Technology and Embodiment in the Digital Age* (New York: Routledge, 2010).

[9] Suzanne Bearne "How Robyn Exton grew popular lesbian dating app Her," *BBC Business News*, May 2016, https://www.bbc.com/news/business-36202226.

[10] Donna Haraway, "A Manifesto for Cyborgs: Science, Technology, and Socialist Feminism in the 1980s," *in Feminism/Postmodernism*, ed. Linda Nicholson (New York: Routledge, 1990), 190-233.

[11] Old Boys Network, "Conference Call and Call for Proposals and Abstracts: Strategies for a New Cyberfeminism," Next Cyberfeminist International, Rotterdam, March 8-13, 1999, https://www.obn.org/nCI/call.htm.

[12] Allucquére Rosanne [Sandy] Stone, *The War of Desire and Technology at the Close of the Mechanical Age* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1995), 7.

[13] *Dandy Dust*, directed by Hans Scheirl (Millivres, 1998), DVD.

[14] Caitlin Sullivan and Kate Bornstein, *Nearly Roadkill: An Infobahn Erotic Adventure* (New York: Serpent's Tail, 1996).

[15] William Gibson, *Neuromancer* (New York: Ace, 1984).

[16] Mark Dery, "Flame Wars," in *Flame Wars: The Discourse of Cyberculture*, ed. Mark Dery (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1994), 1-10.

[17] Jillana Enteen, "`On the Receiving End of the Colonization': Nalo Hopkinson's 'Nansi Web,'" *Science Fiction Studies* 34, no. 2 (2007): 262-82.

[18] Joshua Gamson, "Gay Media, Inc.: Media Structures, the New Gay Conglomerates, and Collective Sexual Identities," in *Cyberactivism: Online Activism in Theory and Practice*, ed. Martha McCaughey and Michael D. Ayers (New York: Routledge, 2003), 255-278.

[19] Wakeford, "Cyberqueer"; and David Gauntlett, *Media, Gender and Identity: An Introduction* (London: Routledge, 2002).

[20] Lisa Duggan, "The New Homonormativity: The Sexual Politics of Neoliberalism," in *Materializing Democracy: Toward a Revitalized Cultural Politics*, ed. Russ Castronovo and Dana D. Nelson (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002), 179.

[21] Mowlabocus, *Gaydar Culture*.

[22] See Julian Dibbell, *My Tiny Life: Crime and Passion in a Virtual World* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1999); and Lisa Nakamura, "Race In/For Cyberspace: Identity Tourism and Racial Passing on the Internet," in *The Cybercultures Reader*, ed. David Bell and Barbara M. Kennedy (New York: Routledge, 2000), 712-720.

[23] Dibbell, *My Tiny Life*; Nakamura, "Race In/For Cyberspace"; and Caroline Bassett, "Virtually Gendered: Life in an Online World," in *The Subcultures Reader*, ed. Ken Gelder and Sarah Thornton (New York: Routledge, 1997), 537-556.

[24] Andil Gosine, "Blonde to Brown at gay.com: Passing White in Queer Cyberspace," in *Queer Online: Media Technology and Sexuality*, ed. Kate O'Riordan and David J. Phillips (New York: Peter Lang, 2007), 139-154; Mowlabocus, *Gaydar Culture*; and Nakamura, "Race In/For Cyberspace."

[25] Stone, *The War of Desire*, 40.

[26] Stone, *The War of Desire*, 17.

[27] See Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1990) and *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of Sex* (New York: Routledge, 1993).

[28] Miguel Helft, "Facebook, Foe of Anonymity, Is Forced to Explain a Secret," *New York* Times, May 13, 2011, http://www.nytimes.com/2011/05/14/technology/14facebook.html.

[29] Sharif Mowlabocus, Craig Haslop, and Rohit Dasgupta, "From Scene to Screen: The Challenges and Opportunities that Digital Platforms Pose for HIV Prevention Work with MSM," *Social Media and Society* 2, no. 4 (2016): 1-8.

[30] Olu Jenzen, "Unicorns Farting Rainbows: Changing Aesthetics and Mobilizing Discourses in LGBT Youth Activism Today," (presentation, ECREA Digital Culture and Communication Section Conference, University of Brighton, November 6-7, 2017) and "Trans Youth and Social Media: Moving Between Counterpublics and the Wider Web," *Gender, Place and Culture* 24, no. 11 (2017): 1626-1641.

[31] Kath Browne and Catherine Nash, "Heteroactivism: Beyond Anti-Gay," *ACME: An International Journal for Critical Geographies* 16, no. 4 (2017): 643-652.

[32] See Angela Nagle, *Kill All Normies: Online Culture Wars from 4chan and Tumblr to Trump and the Alt-Right* (Winchester, UK: Zero Books, 2017).

[33] Yilun Wang and Michal Kosinski, "Deep Neural Networks Are More Accurate Than Humans at Detecting Sexual Orientation From Facial Images," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 114, no. 2 (2018): 246-57.

[34] Mark Dery, "Flame Wars," 6.